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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002492

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SUBJECT: AGR: GOT SQUARELY FOCUSED ON OCTOBER 10

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 b, d

11. (C) SUMMARY. Senior MFA officials informed the Ambassador that they view the October 10 mark-up on the Armenian genocide resolution (AGR) in the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) as critical. They are engaged at the highest levels to prevent the resolution from passing out of committee. They believe that the newly re-elected government of Turkey will be under tremendous, inescapable pressure from the public to react to the passage of this resolution. The Ambassador emphasized Administration efforts to forestall adoption of the resolution and appealed to MFA to try to help us by blunting the sharply negative effect of the Energy Ministry's recent announcement that it intends to invest \$3.5 billion to develop Iran's South Pars gas field. Ambassador also stressed that it is not too late for the GOT to influence the vote in a significant way through a meaningful gesture to Armenia; if we dodge this bullet now, the GOT must take steps quickly toward Armenia. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Ambassador met October 5 with MFA U/S Apakan, Director General for Americas Ocak, and Director General for Security Affairs Guven to confer on the AGR. GOT officials view the HFAC vote as critical and the last, best hope of preventing the resolution's adoption. Apakan reported on GOT efforts. PM Erdogan will speak by phone to President Bush on October 5. The GOT is also seeking former President Clinton's intervention with Speaker Pelosi. FM Babacan is sending letters to Secretary Rice, Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Lantos, and all members of the HFAC, and a delegation of Turkish parliamentarians will be in Washington shortly for consultations. In addition, PM Erdogan has spoken to Israeli President Peres; Turkish Parliament Speaker Toptan sent a letter to Speaker Pelosi; President Gul wrote to President Bush, as did Defense Minister Gonul to Secretary Gates; and Apakan expects TGS Chief Buyukanit to do the same to his Joint Chiefs counterpart, Admiral Mullen.

13. (C) Apakan urged President Bush's personal involvement now, before this bill goes to the floor. He stressed that Turkey's energy relations with Iran or contact with Syria should not be used as a pretext for moving this resolution forward. Apakan said that Turks will view passage of this resolution as new evidence of the failure of their relationship with the West. He claimed that the resolution plays into the hands of those trying to upset U.S.-Turkey relations and threatens Turkey's entire western orientation. DG Ocak said he is worried that Speaker Pelosi does not understand that the GOT will have to react. Turkey, he said, is now governed by an administration that, despite its electoral success, is more vulnerable to public pressure than

any of its predecessors. Guven cited the strong, negative reaction to Turkey's counter-terrorism agreement with Iraq as evidence that the media is ready to pounce.

¶4. (C) Ambassador reviewed the U.S. strategy and efforts on the AGR. HFAC is the focus. He noted the importance of Chairman Lantos, who has enormous credibility on this issue. However, the preliminary gas deals with Iran and the announcement by Energy Minister Guler that Turkey will sign an agreement this month to invest \$3.5 billion to develop Iran's South Pars field has the potential to add many votes for the resolution and guarantee its passage. Turkey should find a way immediately to distance itself from this project and re-state its strong support for UNSC and P5 efforts to persuade Iran to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

¶5. (C) Apakan said that FM Babacan told Armenian FM Oskanian in New York that if the resolution passes, talks between the two countries will be impossible. The GOT believes Yerevan is playing a key role in advancing AGR. Adoption will be a lose-lose for Turkey and Armenia. Ambassador understood that the scheduled mark-up in committee makes a meaningful gesture to Armenia harder, but said it is not too late. If the AGR does not get through the committee, Turkey should return to its dialogue with Armenia in an urgent and ambitious way.

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WILSON